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**U.S. CHARGES COLLEGE STUDENT WITH SENDING
BOMB THREAT BY E-MAIL TO MANHATTAN SOFTWARE COMPANY**

JAMES B. COMEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, PASQUALE D'AMURO, the Assistant Director in Charge of FBI's New York Office, and RAYMOND W. KELLY, New York City Police Commissioner, announced that BENJAMIN SAMAR, a student at the Art Institute of Philadelphia, was charged today with sending a bomb threat by electronic mail ("e-mail") to Hotbar.com, a software company located in Manhattan.

According to a Complaint filed in Manhattan federal court, SAMAR used an e-mail account that he had established named ["killhotbar@yahoo.com"](mailto:killhotbar@yahoo.com) to send an e-mail threat to the company on August 19, 2003. The Complaint alleges that the e-mail accused Hotbar.com of distributing a computer virus, and directed the company to issue a public apology and to take actions to remove the virus by August 25, 2003.

SAMAR also allegedly stated in the e-mail that if Hotbar.com did not accede to his demands by that date, he would send a bomb to the company, promising to "inflict horrible pain upon the innocent employees" of Hotbar.com. The e-mail also threatened that the package containing the bomb would seem harmless, but that anyone opening the package would die, it was charged.

SAMAR, who surrendered today, is expected to be presented before United States Magistrate Judge KEVIN N. FOX later today.

If convicted on the one count of transmitting a threat in interstate commerce, SAMAR faces a maximum sentence of five years in prison and the greater of a \$250,000 fine or twice the gross gain or loss resulting from the crime.

Mr. COMEY praised the efforts of the Joint Terrorism Task Force, comprised of members of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the New York City Police Department, in the investigation of this case.

Mr. COMEY said the investigation is continuing.

Assistant United States Attorney CHRISTINA BISCHOFF is in charge of the prosecution.

The charge contained in the Complaint is merely an accusation, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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